



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LETTERS FROM A PRIVATE DUTY NURSE

VII

THE NURSES' LODGE.

DEAR MARY:

I was glad to have your letter and interested to hear about your cousin Allison. You say she has been confused by conflicting advice as to what she needs when starting on private duty, and has referred to you; and you refer to me, as I have had the more experience.

Probably the reason the advice was contrary is that different nurses take different things; and what one takes depends, in part, on the special work one has undertaken. I can tell you what my outfit is, and Allison will do very well to begin with that and make her own choice later. I used to take more things; but I have reduced them to a minimum, because carrying heavy bags is foolishness.

To begin with, one needs, of course, clinical charts, both daily and four-hour; bedside notes; two clinical thermometers, with different cases so that they can readily be told apart, one for mouth and one for rectal use; hypodermic syringe, the little glass kind is best—and hypodermic tablets of morphia gr. $\frac{1}{4}$ with atropia gr. $\frac{1}{150}$, strichnia gr. $\frac{1}{80}$, and nitroglycerine gr. $\frac{1}{100}$. Some nurses take sterile camphorated oil, but I do not. Then a pad and pencil for orders, and a fountain pen for keeping the charts; scissors, forceps and probe in a little box, each one boiled and separately wrapped in clean tissue paper; a rubber funnel and two rectal tubes—one for adults and one for children. I don't get the real rectal tubes because they are so big, I like large sized catheters better. I also take a four-ounce graduate for urine, which is of great use; and a glass douche nozzle, rectal nozzle and catheter; and a hard rubber douche nozzle, rectal nozzle, and soft rubber catheter. The reason I take a double set is that the glass ones are so clean and nice and, I think, more comfortable for the patient, but some surgeons won't allow the use of them. A surgeon once told me that a patient of his was taking a douche with a glass nozzle and something startled her and she jumped and broke it off. He had to do a laparotomy to extricate the glass, so he naturally had a prejudice. I think, however, when the nurse uses them, the risk of breaking is nil. I also take a ten cent roll of absorbent cotton; a small bottle of corrosive tablets; a graduate medicine and minim glass—the kind that come together in a leather case; a small work bag, containing needles and thread and buttons and tape; and a box of safety pins.

Allison may think the last named things unnecessary; but let me tell her that she can turn a household upside down by asking for a needle

and thread to sew a button on a child's night gown, or for a piece of tape to help adjust some piece of surgical apparatus. As for the pins, every one has some pet economy, and the favorite economy of the rich seems to be pins, especially safety pins, and she will find it convenient to have some with her. I forgot them last time and my patient was a three months' baby. There was one safety pin in her diaper, but I could find no others. I asked her mother where she kept them, and she replied: "I have no large ones but I can give you some small ones." She then produced half a card of the very smallest size, which were of no practical use. Luckily I found a few when I dusted the room. Tell Allison, also, always to take her own wash cloth, sponge and soap, otherwise she will sometimes not have any. The safety-pin lady said to me, "I hope you have a wash cloth, because I have none to offer you." I was so glad that I could say I had. Once when I forgot my soap, I asked the child's mother for some. She replied: "Why don't you use the baby's?" But I did not like to because the poor little baby had tubercular meningitis.

Allison will have a great advantage over the other members of the class, because of her college training. Nurses go into the work so young now, often as soon as they graduate from high school, that they have no background to their professional lives. Probably after she has had a try at private nursing, she will get a teaching position, for nurses who have had training in teaching are much in demand. Also, in that way lies promotion. When one is a private nurse, one is just a private nurse to the end of the chapter.

I shall be pleased to send Allison a little gift for graduation. New beginnings mean so much, and I well remember how disappointed I felt when your letter of congratulation came from your family and I had none. The profession was in its beginnings then and Mother actually thought I was disgracing the family by undertaking anything so plebeian, as she considered it. "The old order changeth giving place to the new."

I am so glad for Allison and the others, just beginning, that some of the stumbling blocks which hindered us have been removed from their path. I love to see them starting out so eagerly, and so well equipped on their careers; and I do hope, whatever else happens, they will keep their ideals.

Your very loving friend,

MARGARET RAMSEY.